

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 0664

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PGOV PINT AO PO

SUBJECT: SOCIALIST LEADER ON ANGOLA

REF: LISBON 149

SUMMARY: SOCIALIST PARTY INSIDER MANUEL ALEGRE TOLD CHARGE THAT MPLA AND UNITA HAVE HAD RECENT CONTACT. ALEGRE SAID THERE WERE NEW SIGNS OF A SOVIET MOVE AGAINST NETO. END SUMMARY.

1. GLIMMER OF HOPE: MANUEL ALEGRE, SOCIALIST PARTY LEADER AND STATE SECRETARY TO MARIO SOARES TOLD CHARGE JAN 24:

--RECENT CONTACTS: MPLA AND UNITA HAD RECENT CONTACTS IN SENEGAL AND ANOTHER AFRICAN COUNTRY.

--SOVIET MOVES: NETO'S OPENING WAS PROMPTED BY SIGNS OF ANOTHER SOVIET MOVE TO TOPPLE NETO.

--TACTICAL RETREAT: NETO AND OTHER MPLA MODERATES HAD MADE A TACTICAL RETREAT AT THE MPLA CONGRESS IN ORDER TO MARSHALL THEIR STRENGTH. SOVIET-AND CUBAN-
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INFLUENCED MILITARY RADICALS HAD DOMINATED THE MPLA CONGRESS ACCORDING TO ALEGRE. MPLA MODERATES WERE UPSET THAT YUGOSLAVIA AND PORTUGAL HAD NOT MOVED MORE RAPIDLY TO MEET ANGOLA'S REQUEST FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE.

2. SOVIET ASSETS: DESPITE SOME HOPEFUL SIGNS, ALEGRE NOTED THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS HAVE TREMENDOUS ADVANTAGES

IN ANGOLA AND CONTROL THE KEY MILITARY AND CIVILIAN POSTS. THE MPLA ACCORDING TO ALEGRE CAN HOLD THE CITIES INDEFINITELY WITH CONTINUED CUBAN SUPPORT, BUT THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS ARE FACING INCREASING RESENTMENT IN LUANDA. ALEGRE SAID THAT NETO IS LOOKING FOR A WAY OUT OF A DIFFICULT SITUATION BUT MUST MOVE VERY CAREFULLY.

3. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH HE WAS PRESSED, ALEGRE WAS UNABLE TO BE MORE SPECIFIC. HE DID NOT KNOW WHERE THE SECOND MPLA/UNITA CONTACT HAD TAKEN PLACE. ALEGRE MADE CLEAR THAT HIS INFORMATION REGARDING MPLA/UNITA CONTACTS AND NEW SOVIET MOVES AGAINST NETO WAS NEWLY ACQUIRED. ALEGRE IS CLOSE TO MPLA MODERATES, HOWEVER, AND HIS HOPES FOR THEIR SUCCESS MAY AT TIMES COLOR HIS REPORTING. WE WILL SEEK TO GATHER FURTHER DETAILS FROM SOURCES HERE. OKUN

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